[From the Washington Post, Nov. 7, 2017]

THE QUIET, PRODUCTIVE TENURE OF RUSTY POWELL TO COME TO AN END

(By Geoff Edgers)

National Gallery of Art Director Earl ''Rusty'' Powell, whose tenure has been marked by the collection's growth, the renovation of nearly every space and a startling lack of controversy, will retire in early 2019 after more than 25 years in charge.

Powell, 74, planned to tell the National Gallery's staff Tuesday during informal meetings. Next year, the trustees will begin the process of finding a successor for the longest-serving director in its 76-year history.

''I think I have run a pretty good race here, and it seems sort of a logical time,'' Powell said in explaining the decision. ''I turn 75 next year. And this will be after that. I still have some gas in the tank. I'm not particularly interested in sitting on the porch looking at sunsets.''

What he'll do, he said, is not clear. But what he has accomplished at the National Gallery is easy to chart. Over Powell's tenure, the institution, with a $200 million operating budget and 5 million visitors a year, has been reshaped, from the addition of a sculpture garden in 1999 to the dramatic renovation of the East Building, completed last year to add stunning galleries devoted to Mark Rothko and to Barnett Newman's ''Stations of the Cross.'' Powell has also overseen projects less buzzworthy but just as essential.

Six years and $19.3 million were spent renovating more than three acres of leaky skylights in the West Building, part of a deferred maintenance disaster once considered so dire it inspired a local TV news series titled ''Gallery of Shame.''

Powell's tenure has also been notable for something it lacked: controversy.

''He's had that balance between being able to make decisions and yet not offend everybody,'' said John Wilmerding, the former National Gallery deputy director who later served as chairman of its board of trustees.

Powell would never use words such as ''consummate leadership,'' as his supporters do, to describe himself. He can be witty, have strong opinions, but these often come as asides, spoken softly and without naming names. He is not one to call out other museum directors, even though he does note that he doesn't agree with everyone in the field. About what? With whom? He won't say.

This is in contrast with J. Carter Brown, the blue-eyed impresario he replaced in 1992. Brown loved blockbusters, mingling with royals—he brought Prince Charles and Princess Diana to the National Gallery in 1985—and tended to spend less time on issues such as infrastructure. Wilmerding remembered that when Powell started, he noticed a stiffness when Powell had to speak in front of groups.

''He relied too much on his notes,'' Wilmerding said. ''I remember saying to him, 'You've got the personality—do more. Wing it. Tell jokes. Be yourself.' That awkwardness rapidly began to change.''

Born in South Carolina, Powell was just 4 when his father died of injuries sustained during World War II. The family moved to Rhode Island, and his mother eventually remarried. Powell went to Williams College, where he played linebacker and, after struggling to conquer chemistry class, found himself studying art history.

As a boy, he had fond memories of hanging around his grandfather's lithography business. In college, he found inspiration in S. Lane Faison Jr., a legendary professor who would help train many members of the ''Williams mafia,'' a group of graduates that included future museum directors Glenn D. Lowry of the Museum of Modern Art; James Wood of the Art Institute of Chicago; and Powell's onetime roommate, John Lane, who led the Dallas Museum of Art and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Other Williams graduates to become directors include Michael Govan of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Joseph Thompson of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

Powell credits his next stop—three years in the Navy, from 1966 to 1969—with helping him develop the skills to become a leader. Lane also went from Williams to the Navy. The time served helped them step into directorships while only in their mid–30s.

''We had already had the happy burden of being responsible for a huge piece of machinery and a lot of fellow shipmates,'' Lane said. ''And in what were particularly dangerous circumstances. You were well equipped to take on responsibility.''

The service also, unexpectedly, led Powell to Harvard. One afternoon, Powell stopped by the art history department at Harvard to ask for a course catalogue. Professor Seymour Slive, a World War II veteran, noticed he was wearing his Navy whites, struck up a conversation, and then urged him to attend graduate school in Cambridge. This started a long list of opportunities that opened up for Powell, who noted that ''I've never had to apply for a job.''

In 1976, not long after Powell earned his PhD, Brown hired him for his first stint at the National Gallery as a curator and special assistant.

And in 1980, Powell took his first trip to California to interview for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's top job. At 36, he began a 12–year tenure marked by tremendous growth, with the museum's budget jumping from $8.5 million to $31 million and attendance more than doubling to close to a million visitors a year.

Comedian Steve Martin, who served on the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's board of trustees, marveled at Powell's ability to embrace a wide range of art, his cordial nature and his ability to understand how to manage the many perspectives on the board. What's more, Martin found it notable that Powell's tenure was conflict-free.

''I never heard anybody say an unkind word about him,'' said Martin, an art collector.

Powell, when asked about his leadership style, gives credit to others—curators, other administrators, staff—for making him feel comfortable delegating authority. He uses email but says many of his meetings are informal, taking place as he walks from his car to his office in the morning.

''I've always believed in a collegial, organizational structure,'' he said. ''I think communication is a really important thing. I learned to look at the big things. Not get bogged down with the little things. We make collective decisions about most of the things we do here. Our exhibitions program. It's not 'Rusty says we'll do this, we'll do that.' We talk about it. We meet and discuss things rather than do things from the top of it.''

Powell can be so understated, it's hard to know when he's asking for anything. Even millions. That's what longtime board president Victoria Sant found when the National Gallery was raising money for the renovation of the East Building.

''You sort of don't know when Rusty's put the touch on you,'' she said. ''He's not an aggressive fundraiser. He tries to bring things to people that they want, that was in their interest area. And I think one of the things that Rusty has stressed is that when you give a gift to the National Gallery, you're really giving a gift to the nation.''

Sant and her husband, Roger, ultimately gave $10 million to the East Building project, which added more than 12,000 square feet of gallery space and an outdoor sculpture terrace overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue.

That was just one of the most recent accomplishments during Powell's tenure. The list of art acquisitions, exhibitions and building projects that have taken place since 1992 runs for pages, from the construction of Dutch cabinet galleries in 1995 to the endowment campaign launched last year after a $30 million matching grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Powell's announcement means there will no longer be a director who spent time with Paul Mellon, the late philanthropist who stood next to President Franklin D. Roosevelt when the family's money and art collection sparked the National Gallery's opening in 1941.

It was in Powell's first week as director that Mellon invited him for lunch. Later, the philanthropist shared his passion for a proposed sculpture garden. Powell remembers showing Mellon the plans.

''How big are the trees?'' Mellon asked.

''We're going to have them as big as we can get them,'' Powell said.

''Good, because I don't have that much time left and I'd really like to see this,'' Mellon said.

''Mr. Mellon, we're not going to give you a starter kit for the sculpture garden,'' Powell said.

The garden, in fact, opened in May 1999, four months after Mellon's death at the age of 91.

Powell said he never considered leaving the National Gallery, even when headhunting firms called to see whether he might be interested in other jobs. (Powell's total compensation was comparable to those at other major institutions. He earned $1.17 million in the most recent public filing available, compared with the $1.44 million earned by then-Met Director Thomas Campbell.) He appreciated not having to spend so much time trying to raise money, as is the case when you're running the Metropolitan Museum of Art or Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Nearly three-quarters of the National Gallery's $200 million annual operating budget comes from the federal government.

He also feels a deep connection to the District.

''If you do what I do, it's the best job in the field,'' he said. ''The standards are very high. The collections are exemplary. The programs are great. You're not out with a tin cup raising money to keep the building open. The federal funding obligations are to keep it maintained. It's got a center for advanced study. I came out of the academic side, and this is the most academic place that can exist. It's a unique place in the context of American museums.''

## TRIBUTE TO RON POWERS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the moving work of Ron Powers of Castleton, VT—a Pulitzer Prize-winning author who has written about everything from Mark Twain to the soldiers of Iwo Jima to broadcast news and sports.

Ron's latest book, ''No One Cares About Crazy People,'' concentrates on a topic that he promised himself he would never write about: the social history of mental illness in America. This story is poignantly told through his own deeply personal story of his two

sons' struggles with schizophrenia, which tragically claimed the life of one of them.

The book's informative yet intimate approach raises awareness about a subject that most are too uncomfortable to broach. When reading it, you can hardly hold back tears.

I cannot imagine the pain Ron and Honoree went through while working on this book. It is a truly personal journey and a triumph. I am proud of him for publishing this important work. He understands that mental illness is not an issue that will simply go away if pushed into the darkness of neglect and denial. One cannot lock it up in an institution and expect to be rid of the problem. Mental illness in America needs to be discussed openly, by those who suffer from it, the friends and families of those affected, medical experts, and those of us Senators. We must all follow the footsteps of Ron and continue to shine a light on this extremely sensitive issue.

I ask unanimous consent that the October 8, 2017, Vermont Digger article honoring Ron Powers and his family and recognizing his great work be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Vermont Digger, Oct. 8, 2017]

A VERMONTER QUESTIONS THE NATION'S MENTAL HEALTH

(By Kevin O'Connor)

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ron Powers' past works have eagerly explored everything from the 1800s literary lion Mark Twain to the flag-raising World War II soldiers at Iwo Jima and the present-day pioneers of broadcast news and sports.

The Vermonter's current focus is different.

''This is the book I promised myself I would never write,'' Powers begins its preface. ''I have kept that promise for a decade—since our younger son, Kevin, hanged himself in our basement, a week before his 21st birthday in July 2005, after struggling for three years with schizophrenia.''

The author, born 75 years ago in Twain's hometown of Hannibal, Missouri, can boast of a prolific career that has seen him in a columnist's chair at the Chicago Sun-Times and a commentator's seat on the CBS News program ''Sunday Morning,'' as well as on the best-seller list for more than a dozen books that include collaborating on the late U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy's memoir ''True Compass.''

But after the death of one of his two boys, the Castleton resident could barely think about, let alone tackle, another project. He and his wife, Honoree Fleming, were finally starting to heal (''adaptation, really,'' he says) when they saw their surviving son, experiencing a psychotic break one Christmas, tell neighbors he was the messiah before police took him to a hospital.

And so Powers began to research mental illness—not just the schizophrenia his family has faced but also all the other issues the World Health Organization estimates will affect one-fourth of the world's people at some point in their lives.

''I realized that my 10 years of silence on the subject,'' he says, ''silence that I had justified as insulation against an exercise in self-indulgence, was itself an exercise in self-indulgence.''

And so Powers is talking up his new book, ''No One Cares About Crazy People: The Chaos and Heartbreak of Mental Health in America.'' The 384–page Hachette hardcover shares his family's story alongside a historic and often horrific survey of mental illness in larger society.

''Studies by the National Institute of Mental Health show that among Americans age 18 or older, more than 62 million (26 percent of the population) require (but are not always given) counseling and medical treatment,'' he writes.

Powers could cite too many reasons for not wanting to tackle the topic: What about his family's privacy? The appearance of exploitation? The fact he isn't an expert?

''Book writing is hard work,'' he continues. ''And, really, end of the day, who the hell wants to read about schizophrenia anyway?''

Plenty of people, the author would discover. Nearly a decade after their son's death, Powers and his wife accepted an invitation to testify at a 2014 Vermont legislative hearing on whether acutely mentally ill patients should be medicated against their will.

''At first glance, speedy 'involuntary treatment' might seem the least objectionable of measures, given that people in psychosis are virtually never capable of making rational decisions,'' he writes in his book. ''And yet opponents of the process bring passionate counterarguments to the debate. Among the most formidable is that 'involuntary treatment' is by definition a violation of one's civil liberties.''

Powers testified in support of shorter waits on decisions about involuntary intervention, which the Legislature went on to adopt as law. But the author was moved by opponents of the measure.

''They were there: the faces and souls of the mentally ill, emerging from their prevailing invisibility to declare themselves,'' he writes. ''The sheer presence of them, their actualization in the room, had affected me in the gut, not because I hadn't expected them, but because of the profound, elemental humanity of them.''

Three weeks later, Powers read news of a Wisconsin political aide who, responding to headlines of state mental health mismanagement, emailed a colleague: ''No one cares about crazy people.''

That's when the author started writing—for himself, his household, other families, friends, neighbors and psychiatric professionals.

''My aim with this book is not to replace or argue with the existing vast inventory of important books on mental illness,'' he writes. ''Rather, I hope to reamplify a simple and self-evident and morally insupportable truth: Too many of the mentally ill in our country live under conditions of atrocity.''

Powers has taken his message to National Public Radio's ''Fresh Air'' program and is seeing it shared in publications nationwide.

''He writes with fierce hope and fierce purpose to persuade the world to pay attention,'' fellow Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ron Suskind wrote in a review for The New York Times. ''I'm not sure I've ever read anything that handles the decline of one's children with such openness and searing, stumbling honesty.''

Readers can learn for themselves when Powers speaks at the Brattleboro Literary Festival on Saturday at 11 a.m. at the downtown Centre Congregational Church. If similar appearances are any indication, he'll share a few of the book's humorous family stories, too.

''Why do I include these?'' he told an audience in Manchester. ''Because they make me smile and bring the two boys to life. I wanted to avoid a kind of cliché—the afflicted loved ones described only in the context of their victimhood. It's hard to feel compassion for an abstract. My sons were wonderful spirited boys before this affliction struck.''

That said, Powers isn't seeking to entertain.

''I hope you do not 'enjoy' this book,'' he writes. ''I hope you are wounded by it; wounded as I have been in writing it. Wounded to act, to intervene.''

''America must turn its immense resources and energy and conciliatory goodwill to a final assault on mental illness,'' he concludes. ''My sons, and your afflicted children and brothers and sisters and parents and friends, deserve nothing less.''

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES EXHIBIT ''REMEMBERING VIETNAM''

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, long before his confirmation as the 10th Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero proudly served our Nation in a different capacity, as a Navy corpsman in Vietnam. Today, with the help of Mr. Ferreiro's unique personal perspective and professionally informed guidance, the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery at the National Archives Museum in Washington, DC, is currently exhibiting a new collection of remarkable documents that illustrate some of the Vietnam war's biggest controversies.

Mr. Ferriero and his team are to be thanked for painstakingly determining which of the countless relevant texts housed in the National Archives best told this often misunderstood story. We can be sure, however, that few if any archivists are better suited with experience and vision for this task than Mr. Ferriero.

With this exhibit, Mr. Ferriero and his team honor the memory of those who served in Vietnam, while also fulfilling a sacred obligation to accurately preserve even our most contentious history so that we may strive to avoid repeating past mistakes. Today I would like to pay tribute to the Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero, and his team and ask unanimous consent that a Washington Post article titled, ''A Veteran's View of Vietnam,'' be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 8, 2017]

A VETERAN'S VIEW OF VIETNAM

(By Michael E. Ruane)

At night, after Navy corpsman David Ferriero finished his clerical duties aboard the hospital ship off Vietnam, he would volunteer to help triage the wounded being helicoptered from the battlefield.

Some had been shot. Others were missing limbs. Some needed treatment right away. Others were dead when they arrived.

It was 1970, and Ferriero was a 25-yearold college dropout from Beverly, Mass., who suffered from seasickness and was a dedicated, if at times inexpert, corpsman.

Today he is the archivist of the United States and the impetus behind the sweeping new exhibit, ''Remembering Vietnam,'' that opens Friday in the Archives' flagship building in the District.

The free exhibit, which runs through Jan. 6, includes some of the most striking documents relating to the war: